

1.172.377

PATENT SPECIFICATION

DRAWINGS ATTACHED

1.172.377

Inventor: WILLIAM WALLACE CEASE

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GREAT BRITAIN
GROUP 31
CLASS 28

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

Food Containers

We, CEASE CENTRAL INC., a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of New York, United States of America, of 186, Lake Shore Drive West, Dunkirk, New York, United States of America, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

This invention relates to containers for holding food preparatory to and up to the point of dispensing the same to consumers and wherein all or part of the container comprises the serving dish for the food.

In accordance with the present invention a container for use in handling, dispensing and serving foods comprises the combination of

(a) a food receptacle having a marginal flange with a retention groove extending along the upper surface thereof and a plurality of compartments open at the top and bounded by walls extending above the said marginal flange, and

(b) a service plate adapted to be applied over the said receptacle in inverted position to serve as a cover for the said compartments with the rim of the service plate in releasable snap-in engagement with the said retention groove and with the interior surface of the service plate abutting the upper edges of the said walls to seal the compartments of the said receptacle from each other and from the surrounding atmosphere.

The containers of the present invention are of particular advantage for use in conjunction with automated food service apparatus. The container construction and arrangement disclosed herein may be securely nested or stacked and may be conveniently and safely separated from a stack or tier of receptacles by mechanical means provided for that purpose.

The container of the present invention has a holder or receptacle having an inverted ser-

vice plate acting as a cover for the holder and may be provided with means on both elements enabling the positive separation of the same in the process of dispensing the food, such dispensing including an inverting step for transferring the food from the holder to the service plate.

One embodiment of a food package according to the present invention is illustrated by way of example in the accompanying drawing and described in detail below.

Referring to the drawing:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of one form of food holder or receptacle unit of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a service plate adapted to serve as a cover for the holder or receptacle of Fig. 1, and

Fig. 3 is a cross sectional view taken approximately on the line III—III of Fig. 1 showing the holder of Fig. 1 and the service plate of Fig. 2 in assembled relation to make up one form of food container in accordance with the present invention. Figs. 1 and 2 are schematic views, the constructional details of the two parts being shown more clearly in Fig. 3.

Like characters of reference denote like parts throughout the several figures of the drawing. The container shown in Figs. 1 through 3 comprises a holder designated generally by the reference numeral 10 and comprising a flat panel portion 11 having integral compartments 12, 13 and 14 and a marginal ledge or bead 15 at its upper surface, the ledge 15 being undercut along its inner side to form a retention groove.

In Figs. 2 and 3 a service plate is designated 18 and ribs 19 and 20 therein divide the same into areas corresponding to and adapted to register with the compartments 12, 13 and 14. If desired, the rib 19 may fit between the containers 12, 13 and 14 as shown in Fig. 3 to assist in locating service plate 18 with respect to holder 10.

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10 The rim of plate 18 is adapted to snap
15 into the undercut portion of ledge 15 as
clearly shown in Fig. 3. In the present in-
stance the holder 10 may be of aluminum and
the service plate 18 of plastic material which
is slightly flexible to facilitate snap-in
assembly. In some instances the plates 18 may
be relatively inflexible, as when they are
china, glass or other ceramic material. In
such case the holder will preferably be of
plastic or other flexible material to permit
such assembly.

15 In the present embodiment of the inven-
tion the assembled holders and plates need
not be stacked in a continuous vertical stack
excepting for transportation or other handling
preliminary to the actual vending or dispen-
sing thereof. When they are positioned for
dispensing the containers may comprise a tier
20 of vertically spaced separately supported con-
tainers as in the apparatus of United States
Patent No. 3,241,709, dated March 22, 1966.
Furthermore, in this embodiment the
assembled holders and plates are intended to
25 be inverted prior to separation and ultimate
dispensing of food on the service plate, like-
wise as shown in patent No. 3,241,709, and
the holder 10 may be disposed of as con-
templated in that application.

30 In the form of the present invention illus-
trated in Figs. 1, 2 and 3 the bottom wall of
service plate 18 is extended at opposite sides
to form projecting flanges 21 which facilitate
separation of the resiliency engaged holders
35 and plates. The mechanical means for effect-
ing this separation in co-operation with flanges
21 of plate 18 and the outer margins of
holder 10 may be, for instance, as illustrated
in Fig. 10 of patent No. 3,241,709.

40 Referring to Fig. 3 it will be noted that
compartment 12 includes a well portion hav-
ing rib formations for supporting solid food
above the well portion, as in Figs. 1, 2, 7, 11,
12 and 13 of United States Patent No.
45 3,240,610, dated March 15, 1966. Also, the

compartment 13 has integrally molded up-
standing tapered pin or pyramid formations
spaced uniformly about its bottom interior
surface as at 16 in Fig. 3 for supporting food
such as peas above such bottom wall whereby
butter or other semi-liquid dressing may be
contained in the lower part of the compart-
ment prior to inversion thereof.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. A container for use in handling, dis-
55 pensing and serving prepared foods, compris-
ing the combination of

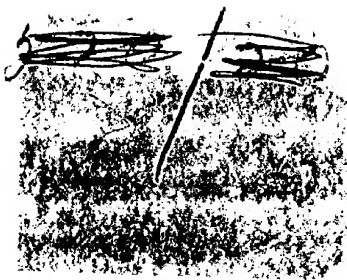
(a) a food receptacle having a marginal
flange with a retention groove extending
along the upper surface thereof and a plurality
60 of compartments open at the top and bounded
by walls extending above the said marginal
flange, and

(b) a service plate adapted to be applied
over the said receptacle in inverted position
to serve as a cover for the said compart-
ments with the rim of the service plate in
releasable snap-in engagement with the said
retention groove and with the interior sur-
75 face of the service plate abutting the upper
edges of the said walls to seal the compart-
ments of the said receptacle from each other
and from the surrounding atmosphere.

2. A container according to claim 1, where-
in said service plate has outstanding flange
75 means spaced vertically from the marginal
flange thereof whereby said outstanding flange
means and the marginal flange of said recep-
tacle are engageable for separating the recep-
tacle and the service plate.

3. A container for use in handling, dis-
80 pensing and serving prepared foods substan-
tially as hereinbefore described with reference
to the accompanying drawing.

MATHYS & SQUIRE,
Chartered Patent Agents,
10 Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.
Agents for the Applicants.



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COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

1 SHEET

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